



THE MUN FACTORY 3.0

Pan India Youth Leadership Platform

MAHABHARAT

The Royal Court of Hastinapur

Background Guide

Dharma. Power. Destiny.

Committee: Mahabharat — The Royal Court of Hastinapur
Agenda: Preservation of Dharma, Succession, and State Stability
Amidst the Rising Conflict Between the Kuru Dynasty

The MUN Factory 3.0

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1 About The MUN Factory

The MUN Factory (TMF) is one of India's premier youth leadership platforms, dedicated to fostering diplomatic acumen, critical thinking, and international awareness among the next generation of leaders. Through its Model United Nations conferences, TMF creates immersive simulations that challenge delegates to engage with complex geopolitical scenarios, historical crises, and ethical dilemmas.

TMF 3.0 represents the third iteration of this flagship initiative, bringing together delegates from across the nation to participate in committees that blend historical depth with contemporary relevance. Each committee is designed to simulate real-world decision-making processes, requiring delegates to research extensively, negotiate strategically, and articulate positions with precision.

This Background Guide has been prepared to provide delegates with the historical, political, and strategic context necessary to participate effectively in the committee. It is intended for delegates with no prior knowledge of the Mahabharata while remaining valuable for experienced participants seeking deeper analytical frameworks.

2 Introduction to This Committee

This is not merely mythology. This committee recreates one of history's greatest political and ethical crises — a moment when the fate of an entire civilization hangs in the balance, when loyalty conflicts with righteousness, and when the cost of war threatens to annihilate all that the Kuru dynasty has built over generations.

Delegates will govern Hastinapur while history is still unwritten. The Kurukshetra War is not yet inevitable. Diplomacy is still possible. Alliances are still forming. The question before this committee is whether the leaders of the ancient Indian subcontinent can find a path to peace — or whether their pride, ambition, and competing visions of Dharma will drive them toward a conflict that will consume an entire generation of warriors.

This committee simulates the period immediately before the Kurukshetra War, when the Pandavas have returned from their thirteen-year exile demanding the return of their kingdom, Indraprastha. Duryodhana refuses. Krishna has arrived in Hastinapur as an emissary of peace. The kingdom is divided. The question is not who will win a war, but whether war can be prevented at all.

3 About the Mahabharata

3.1 Historical Significance

The Mahabharata is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India, alongside the Ramayana. Comprising over 100,000 verses, it is the longest epic poem ever written — approximately ten times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey combined. The epic is traditionally attributed to the sage Vyasa and has been composed over several centuries,

with its earliest layers dating to approximately the 8th or 9th century BCE and its final form solidified around the 4th century CE.

The Mahabharata is not merely a work of literature. It is a foundational text of Hindu philosophy, containing within it the Bhagavad Gita — a 700-verse dialogue on duty, righteousness, and the nature of action that has influenced Indian thought for millennia. The epic also contains extensive discussions on statecraft, law, ethics, and governance, making it a comprehensive treatise on the political philosophy of ancient India.

3.2 Cultural Importance

The Mahabharata occupies a central position in Indian culture, religion, and philosophy. Its characters are archetypes that have shaped the moral imagination of South Asia for over two millennia. The conflict between the Pandavas and the Kauravas is understood as a cosmic struggle between Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness), with each character embodying specific virtues and vices.

The epic has been retold in virtually every Indian language, and its influence extends across Southeast Asia — from the Ramayana Ballet in Indonesia to the temples of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The Mahabharata's themes of duty, loyalty, justice, and the cost of war resonate universally, making it one of humanity's most enduring narratives.

3.3 Political Relevance

At its core, the Mahabharata is a political text. It describes the structure of a complex multi-kingdom political system — the geopolitical landscape of ancient India — with detailed accounts of alliances, succession disputes, diplomatic negotiations, espionage, and military strategy. The epic's political framework includes:

A centralized Kuru kingdom with a council of elders, a military hierarchy, and allied vassal states. A network of independent kingdoms — Panchala, Matsya, Anga, Gandhara, Magadha, Pragjyotisha, and dozens more — each with their own interests and agendas. A system of Rajasuya and Ashvamedha yajnas (royal sacrifices) that established political hegemony. Marriage alliances that bound kingdoms together in webs of obligation and loyalty.

The Mahabharata's political dynamics mirror those of any complex international system: the tension between powerful states and smaller kingdoms, the role of non-aligned actors, the use of economic leverage and military deterrence, and the challenge of maintaining order in a multipolar world.

3.4 Why the Mahabharata Still Matters Today

The Mahabharata remains relevant because it addresses questions that every civilization must confront: Can peace be maintained when powerful actors refuse to compromise? What is the relationship between personal loyalty and moral duty? When does the pursuit of justice justify the use of force? How should neutral states navigate between warring

powers? These questions are as urgent today as they were in ancient India, making the Mahabharata an ideal framework for a Model United Nations simulation.

4 Political Structure of Hastinapur

The Kuru kingdom of Hastinapur is the dominant political entity in the ancient Indian subcontinent. Its political structure is a complex hierarchy of royal authority, military command, religious counsel, and allied dependencies.

4.1 The King

Dhritarashtra is the reigning monarch of Hastinapur. Born blind, he was never formally crowned, and his younger brother Pandu ruled in his stead. After Pandu's death, Dhritarashtra assumed the throne as regent, raising his hundred sons (the Kauravas) and Pandu's five sons (the Pandavas) together. His blindness — both literal and metaphorical — has been the defining feature of his reign. He possesses the final authority over all matters of state, but his excessive attachment to his sons has compromised his ability to rule impartially.

4.2 The Crown Prince

Duryodhana, the eldest of the hundred Kaurava brothers, is the de facto Crown Prince and the driving force behind the Kaurava faction. Despite not being the eldest son of the previous legitimate king (Pandua), Duryodhana claims the throne by virtue of being the eldest son of the reigning king. His refusal to yield any territory to the Pandavas is the central conflict of this committee.

4.3 The Regent

Bhishma, son of King Shantanu, serves as the commander-in-chief and patriarch of the Kuru dynasty. Having taken a vow of lifelong celibacy and renounced his own claim to the throne, Bhishma serves as the protector of the Kuru lineage. His vow binds him to the throne of Hastinapur regardless of who sits upon it, creating a fundamental tension: he must serve Duryodhana even while recognizing that the Pandavas represent Dharma.

4.4 Royal Advisors

The royal court of Hastinapur is served by several key advisors. Vidura, born of a maidservant, serves as the prime minister and moral conscience of the court. Despite being the incarnation of Yama (the god of justice), his birth status limits his formal authority. Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra's charioteer and advisor, possesses divine sight granted by Vyasa, allowing him to observe events across vast distances. Kripacharya, the royal tutor and an immortal Chiranjeevi, represents the traditional martial establishment.

4.5 The Military

The military structure of Hastinapur is organized into Akshauhinis (military divisions). Bhishma serves as commander-in-chief, with Dronacharya as the preceptor and chief

military strategist. The Kuru army is the largest single military force in the subcontinent, but its effectiveness depends on the loyalty and coordination of allied kingdom contingents.

4.6 Allied Kingdoms

Hastinapur's power extends through a network of allied and vassal kingdoms. Anga (under Karna), Gandhara (under Shakuni), Sindhu (under Jayadratha), Madra (under Shalya), and Pragjyotisha (under Bhagadatta) form the core of the Kaurava alliance. Each brings its own military forces, and their combined strength gives the Kaurava faction an overwhelming numerical advantage.

4.7 Neutral States

Several kingdoms maintain a position of neutrality or have yet to declare their allegiance. The Yadava kingdom of Dwaraka, under Krishna, has offered itself as a neutral arbiter. Balarama has refused to take sides. These neutral states represent critical swing votes that could determine the outcome of the crisis.

4.8 The Council

The Hastinapur court operates through a council system where the king presides, the commander-in-chief commands the military, the preceptor advises on strategy, the prime minister guides policy, and allied kingdom representatives advocate for their interests. Decisions are made through a combination of royal decree, council deliberation, and diplomatic negotiation. The influence hierarchy is complex: while Dhritarashtra holds formal authority, Bhishma commands moral authority, Duryodhana exercises practical power, and Krishna possesses divine wisdom that transcends all earthly hierarchies.

5 Historical Timeline

The following timeline traces the critical events that have led to the present crisis:

KING SHANTANU Marries Satyawati; Bhishma takes his vow of celibacy

BHISHMA'S VOW Renounces throne; pledges eternal service to Hastinapur

BIRTH OF PANDAVAS Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva born to Kunti and Madri

BIRTH OF KAURAVAS Gandhari bears 100 sons; Duryodhana is the eldest

EDUCATION UNDER DRONACHARYA Both factions trained; rivalries deepen; Ekalavya's thumb taken

THE LAC PALACE Duryodhana attempts to assassinate Pandavas; they escape

MARRIAGE OF DRAUPADI Arjuna wins her at her swayamvara; she becomes wife to all five Pandavas

INDRAPRASTHA Pandavas build a magnificent kingdom; Rajasuya Yajna performed

THE DICE GAME Yudhishtira loses everything; Draupadi humiliated; Pandavas exiled

THIRTEEN-YEAR EXILE Twelve years in forest; one year incognito in Matsya kingdom

RETURN AND DEMAND Pandavas return; demand their kingdom. Duryodhana refuses. Krishna arrives.

PRESENT: THE COMMITTEE CONVENES War is imminent. Diplomacy is the last hope.

6 Stakeholder Analysis

The crisis in Hastinapur involves multiple stakeholders, each with distinct goals, interests, and sources of power. Understanding these stakeholders is essential for effective participation in the committee.

6.1 The Kauravas

The Kauravas, led by Duryodhana, represent the reigning faction of the Kuru dynasty. Their primary goal is to retain the throne of Hastinapur and deny the Pandavas any claim to their ancestral kingdom. Duryodhana's interests include maintaining his wealth, status, and the loyalty of his allies. His power derives from his position as the son of the reigning king, his vast military resources, and the support of powerful allies like Karna and Shakuni. The Kauravas' greatest conflict is internal: while Duryodhana and Dushasana are ruthless in their ambition, princes like Vikarna and Yuyutsu represent dissenting voices within the family.

6.2 The Pandavas

The Pandavas, led by Yudhishtira, represent the legitimate claimants to the throne. Their primary goal is the restoration of their kingdom, Indraprastha, and the vindication of Draupadi's honor. Their interests include the preservation of their family, the establishment of a just reign, and the fulfillment of their dharma as Kshatriyas. Their power derives from their moral legitimacy, the support of powerful allies (Krishna, Drupada, Virata), and the exceptional martial abilities of Bhima and Arjuna. Their greatest conflict is between Yudhishtira's commitment to peace and Bhima's demand for vengeance.

6.3 The Royal Elders

Bhishma, Kripacharya, and Vidura represent the traditional authority of the Kuru dynasty. Their goal is to prevent the destruction of the Kuru race while maintaining the principles of Dharma. Bhishma is bound by his vow to serve the throne regardless of who occupies it. Kripacharya follows the traditions of the martial establishment. Vidura represents the voice of conscience. Their power is moral rather than military, but their influence over Dhritarashtra and the court is substantial.

6.4 Krishna and the Yadavas

Krishna represents a transcendent force in the committee. As a divine avatar and the ruler of Dwaraka, he possesses unmatched diplomatic and strategic capabilities. His goal is to restore Dharma to the world. He has offered himself unarmed to the Kauravas and his army

(the Narayani Sena) as an alternative, demonstrating his commitment to peace. His power is absolute but self-limited by his vow not to wield weapons.

6.5 The Allied Kingdoms

The allied kingdoms — Anga, Gandhara, Sindhu, Madra, Pragjyotisha, Kamboja, Avanti, and Bahlika — represent regional powers with their own interests. Their primary goal is to maximize their own security and influence. Their power derives from their military forces, which collectively outnumber the Pandava coalition. Their conflict lies in the tension between loyalty to Hastinapur and their own regional interests.

6.6 The Neutral States

Neutral states — including Balarama's faction in Dwaraka and various independent rulers — represent the critical swing states. Their decision to support either faction or maintain neutrality could determine the outcome of the crisis. Their power lies in their ability to tip the balance of military strength.

7 Political Factions

7.1 The Pandava Faction

The Pandava faction is built around the five brothers and their allies. Their core strength lies in moral legitimacy and the exceptional quality of their warriors. However, they face a numerical disadvantage in terms of military forces. Their coalition includes the Panchala kingdom (through Draupadi), the Matsya kingdom (through the Pandavas' incognito year), the Yadava forces (through Krishna's strategic support), and various independent rulers who have been won over by Yudhishtira's reputation for justice.

Key tensions within this faction: Yudhishtira's reluctance to wage war versus Bhima's eagerness for battle; the competing claims of Draupadi and Dhrishtadyumna for revenge versus Krishna's strategic patience; the differing interests of allied kingdom rulers who may not share the Pandavas' commitment to the cause.

7.2 The Kaurava Faction

The Kaurava faction is built around Duryodhana and his hundred brothers, supported by the most powerful military alliances in the subcontinent. Their strength lies in their numerical superiority, their control of the Hastinapur treasury, and the martial prowess of commanders like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna. Their coalition includes the majority of the regional kingdoms, the Narayani Sena (the Yadava army, offered by Krishna to Duryodhana), and the warrior elite trained by Dronacharya.

Key tensions within this faction: The moral unease of elders like Bhishma and Kripacharya; the resentment of Shakuni toward the Kuru dynasty; the internal conflict of Karna, who serves Duryodhana out of loyalty but struggles with his sense of honor; the differing interests of allied rulers who may not wish to fight a war they cannot win.

7.3 The Neutral and Independent Kingdoms

Several kingdoms have yet to commit to either side. The most significant is the Yadava kingdom itself — while Krishna has offered his army to the Kauravas, he personally supports the Pandavas, creating an internal split among the Yadavas. Other neutral rulers must weigh the benefits of supporting the stronger Kaurava faction against the moral legitimacy of the Pandava cause.

7.4 The Military Command

The military command represents a unique power center. Bhishma, Dronacharya, Kripacharya, Karna, and the various allied commanders possess extraordinary martial abilities that transcend factional politics. Their decisions about command, strategy, and battlefield conduct will significantly influence the outcome of any conflict. The military command is not monolithic: Bhishma secretly favors the Pandavas, Dronacharya is reluctant to fight, and Karna is driven by personal honor rather than political ideology.

7.5 The Religious and Moral Authorities

The religious establishment — including Bhishma, Kripacharya, Vidura, and various sages — represents the moral framework within which all political decisions must be justified. Dharma debates in the committee will be central to the proceedings, as every faction must justify its position in terms of duty, righteousness, and cosmic order. The authority of these figures is derived not from military or political power, but from their embodiment of ethical principles.

8 Complete Portfolio Matrix

The following matrix presents all 60 portfolios available in this committee. Each portfolio has been carefully designed to ensure balanced representation across all factions and meaningful influence for every delegate.

Portfolio	Kingdom	Role	Alignment	Infl.	Mil.	Pol.	Dipl.	Vote	Special Powers	Natural Allies
Dhritarashtra	Hastinapur	Blind King / Head of State	Neutral (Leans Kaurava)	5	1	5	2	5	Royal Decrees, Final Say	Kauravas, Drona
Gandhari	Hastinapur	Queen / Matriarch	Kaurava	5	0	4	3	4	Curse Power, Moral Authority	Kauravas, Shakuni
Bhishma	Hastinapur	Commander / Grandsire	Neutral (Leans Kaurava)	5	5	4	4	5	Divine Weapons, Vow Power	Drona, Kripa
Dronacharya	Hastinapur	Preceptor / Commander	Kaurava (Reluctant)	5	5	3	2	4	Chakravyuha, Absolute Loyalty	Ashwatthama, Karna
Kripacharya	Hastinapur	Royal Tutor / Commander	Neutral	4	4	2	3	3	Immortality, Traditionalism	Bhishma, Kripavarma
Vidura	Hastinapur	Prime Minister / Advisor	Neutral (Leans Pandava)	4	0	4	5	4	Wisdom of Dharma, Speech	Yudhishtira, Krishna
Sanjaya	Hastinapur	Advisor / Seer	Neutral	3	0	2	5	2	Divine Sight, Messenger	Dhritarashtra, Vyasa
Yuyutsu	Hastinapur	Kaurava Prince / Rebel	Neutral (Leans Pandava)	2	1	2	1	2	Insider Knowledge	Yudhishtira, Vidura

Portfolio	Kingdom	Role	Alignment	Infl.	Mil.	Pol.	Dipl.	Vote	Special Powers	Natural Allies
Ashwatthama	Panchala/ Kuru	Warrior / Son of Drona	Kaurava	4	5	2	1	3	Immortality, Agneyastra	Duryodhana, Drona
Kunti	Kunti/Pandava	Mother / Matriarch	Pandava	4	0	4	4	4	Maternal Authority, Secret of Birth	Yudhishtira, Krishna
Duryodhana	Hastinapur	Crown Prince / Leader	Kaurava	5	3	5	4	5	Wealth, Army Mobilization	Karna, Shakuni
Dushasana	Hastinapur	Prince / Enforcer	Kaurava	4	4	2	1	3	Brutality, Execution	Duryodhana, Karna
Vikarna	Hastinapur	Prince / Dissenter	Neutral	2	2	1	2	1	Moral Outrage	Vidura, Bhishma
Yudhishtira	Pandava Camp	Elder Prince / Claimant	Pandava	5	1	5	5	5	Divine Truth, Legitimacy	Krishna, Bhishma
Bhima	Pandava Camp	Prince / Warrior	Pandava	4	5	2	1	3	Immense Strength, Vows	Draupadi, Arjuna
Arjuna	Pandava Camp	Prince / Archer	Pandava	5	5	3	3	4	Divine Weapons, Pashupatastra	Krishna, Draupadi
Nakula	Pandava Camp	Prince / Swordsman	Pandava	3	4	2	2	2	Swordsmanship, Charm	Sahadeva, Kunti
Sahadeva	Pandava Camp	Prince / Astrologer	Pandava	3	3	2	3	2	Astrology, Espionage	Nakula, Krishna
Shri Krishna	Dwaraka/Yadava	Divine Avatar / Strategist	Pandava (Non-combatant)	5	0	5	5	5	Divine Strategy, Narayani Sena	Pandavas, Arjuna
Balarama	Dwaraka/Yadava	Elder Brother / Neutral	Neutral	4	5	3	2	3	Plough and Mace	Krishna
Satyaki	Dwaraka/Yadava	Commander / Vrishni	Pandava	4	4	2	2	3	Vrishni Tactics	Arjuna, Krishna
Uddhava	Dwaraka/Yadava	Advisor / Secretary	Pandava	3	0	3	4	2	Diplomacy, Logistics	Krishna, Satyaki
Kritavarma	Dwaraka/Yadava	Commander / Bhoja	Kaurava	4	4	2	2	3	Narayani Sena (Yadava Army)	Kauravas
Drupada	Panchala	King / Father-in-Law	Pandava	5	4	4	3	4	Panchala Army	Pandavas, Virata
Dhrishadyumna	Panchala	Commander / Son of Drupada	Pandava	4	4	3	2	3	Fire-born Warrior	Arjuna, Drupada
Shikhandi	Panchala	Warrior / Former Amba	Pandava	3	3	2	1	2	Shield against Bhishma	Bhima, Draupadi
Draupadi	Panchala	Queen / Common Wife	Pandava	5	0	4	4	4	Unbound Hair Oath	Bhima, Arjuna, Krishna
Virata	Matsya	King / Protector	Pandava	4	4	3	2	3	Matsya Army, Sanctuary	Drupada, Pandavas
Uttara	Matsya	Prince / Warrior	Pandava	2	3	1	1	1	Bravery, Arjuna's Student	Virata, Arjuna
Shalya	Madra	King / Commander (Tricked)	Kaurava (Reluctant)	4	4	3	2	3	Spear Skills, Madra Army	Karna, Yudhishtira
Shakuni	Gandhara	Prince / Mastermind	Kaurava	4	2	4	5	4	Dice Manipulation, Espionage	Duryodhana, Gandhari
Karna	Anga	King / Adopted Brother	Kaurava	5	5	3	3	5	Kavach-Kundal, Brahmastra	Duryodhana, Ashwatthama
Jayadratha	Sindhu	King / Ally by Marriage	Kaurava	3	3	2	2	2	Boon of Shiva, Sindhu Army	Duryodhana, Shakuni

Portfolio	Kingdom	Role	Alignment	Infl.	Mil.	Pol.	Dipl.	Vote	Special Powers	Natural Allies
Bhagadatta	Pragjyotisha	King / Commander	Kaurava	3	4	2	1	2	Elephant Supriya, Nagastra	Kauravas
Dhrishtaketu	Chedi	King / Son of Shishupala	Pandava	3	3	2	2	2	Vengeance for Father	Pandavas, Drupada
Jayatsena	Magadha	King / Son of Jarasandha	Kaurava	3	3	2	1	2	Magadha Army, Legacy	Kauravas
Kashiraja	Kashi	King	Pandava	2	2	2	2	1	Regional Influence	Pandavas
Kekaya Princes	Kekaya	Kings / Exiles	Pandava	3	3	2	1	2	Kekaya Army	Pandavas
Vinda and Anuvinda	Avanti	Kings / Rulers	Kaurava	3	3	2	1	2	Avanti Army	Kauravas
Bhurishravas	Bahlika	Prince / Warrior	Kaurava	4	4	2	1	3	Somadatta's Son	Kauravas
Bahlika	Bahlika	King / Grandfather	Kaurava (Reluctant)	3	2	3	2	2	Wisdom of Age, Bahlika Army	Bhishma, Duryodhana
Sudakshina	Kamboja	King / Warrior	Kaurava	3	4	1	1	2	Kamboja Cavalry	Kauravas
Abhimanyu	Pandava Camp	Prince / Warrior	Pandava	3	4	2	2	2	Chakravyuha Knowledge	Arjuna, Subhadra
Ghatotkacha	Pandava Camp	Rakshasa / Warrior	Pandava	4	5	1	1	2	Illusion Powers, Night Combat	Bhima, Krishna
Ekalavya	Nishada	Archer / Outsider	Neutral	3	4	1	1	1	Archery (Self-taught)	Drona
Amba	Kashi	Warrior / Vow Keeper	Neutral	2	3	1	1	1	Vow of Reincarnation	Shikhandi
Subhadra	Dwaraka	Queen / Sister of Krishna	Pandava	3	0	3	3	2	Bloodline Legitimacy	Arjuna, Krishna
Ulupi	Pandava Camp	Naga Princess	Pandava	2	3	1	2	1	Naga Boons	Arjuna
Chitrangada	Pandava Camp	Princess	Pandava	2	2	1	2	1	Warrior Skills	Arjuna
Hidimba	Pandava Camp	Rakshasi	Pandava	2	3	1	1	1	Rakshasa Strength	Bhima, Ghatotkacha
Dushala	Hastinapur	Princess / Wife of Jayadratha	Neutral	2	0	2	2	1	Political Marriage	Jayadratha, Duryodhana
Sutasoma	Hastinapur	Kaurava Prince	Kaurava	2	3	1	1	1	Kaurava Loyalty	Duryodhana
Durmukha	Hastinapur	Kaurava Prince	Kaurava	2	3	1	1	1	Kaurava Loyalty	Duryodhana
Vivingsati	Hastinapur	Kaurava Prince	Kaurava	2	3	1	1	1	Kaurava Loyalty	Duryodhana
Nishangin	Hastinapur	Kaurava Prince	Kaurava	2	3	1	1	1	Kaurava Loyalty	Duryodhana
Karna's Sons	Anga	Princes / Warriors	Kaurava	3	4	1	1	2	Archery, Loyalty to Karna	Karna, Duryodhana
Arjuna's Sons	Pandava Camp	Princes / Warriors	Pandava	3	4	1	1	2	Archery, Loyalty to Arjuna	Arjuna, Krishna
Satyaki's Sons	Dwaraka	Princes / Warriors	Pandava	2	3	1	1	1	Vrishni Tactics	Satyaki
Kritavarma's Sons	Dwaraka	Princes / Warriors	Kaurava	2	3	1	1	1	Bhoja Tactics	Kritavarma
Bahlika's Generals	Bahlika	Generals / Warriors	Kaurava	3	4	1	1	2	Bahlika Army	Bhurishravas

9 Character Intelligence

This section provides detailed intelligence briefs for key portfolios. Each brief is designed to help delegates understand their character's motivations, strengths, weaknesses, and potential crisis behavior.

9.1 Dhritarashtra — The Blind King

BIOGRAPHY The eldest son of Ambalika, Dhritarashtra was born blind and was therefore passed over for the throne in favor of his younger brother Pandu. He is the father of the hundred Kaurava princes and the husband of Gandhari. His reign has been defined by his inability to govern impartially, as his love for his sons has consistently overridden his sense of justice.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Maintain the unity of the Kuru kingdom under his sons' rule; prevent the loss of the Hastinapur throne to the Pandavas; preserve the established order of succession.

STRENGTHS Final authority over all state matters; legitimate claim to the throne; deep emotional connection to his subjects; ability to command respect through his position.

WEAKNESSES Extreme attachment (Moha) to his sons; literal and metaphorical blindness; easily manipulated by Duryodhana and Shakuni; tendency toward inaction when decisive action is required.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Duryodhana, Gandhari, Dronacharya. Enemies: Vidura, Yudhishtira. Secret admirer: Krishna's wisdom.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will hesitate at critical moments. Likely to be swayed by emotional appeals from Gandhari or strategic manipulation by Shakuni. May issue royal decrees that contradict his own moral instincts.

9.2 Duryodhana — The Crown Prince

BIOGRAPHY The eldest of the hundred Kaurava sons, Duryodhana was born from a piece of iron (a gandharva curse on Gandhari). He is the most powerful and ambitious of the Kaurava brothers, possessing unmatched skill with the mace, vast wealth, and a network of loyal allies. His defining characteristic is his

refusal to accept any compromise that would diminish his authority.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Retain the throne of Hastinapur in its entirety; crush the Pandavas permanently; establish the Kaurava dynasty as the supreme power in the subcontinent.

STRENGTHS Immense wealth; unmatched mace-fighting ability; masterful political manipulation; ability to inspire fierce loyalty in allies like Karna and Shakuni; control of the Hastinapur treasury and military.

WEAKNESSES Overwhelming greed and jealousy; inability to accept compromise; tendency to alienate neutral parties through aggression; deep insecurity about his legitimacy compared to Yudhishtira.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Karna, Shakuni, Dushasana. Enemies: Bhima, Krishna, Yudhishtira. Manipulates: Dhritarashtra.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will reject all peace proposals. May attempt to assassinate or manipulate key figures. Likely to issue ultimatums and demand absolute surrender from the Pandavas.

9.3 Yudhishtira — The Righteous Prince

BIOGRAPHY The eldest of the five Pandava brothers, son of Kunti and the god Dharma himself. Known as Dharmaraja (King of Righteousness), Yudhishtira is defined by his unwavering commitment to truth and justice. Despite this, he carries the burden of having gambled away his kingdom, his brothers, and his wife in the dice game.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Reclaim Indraprastha; establish a reign of Dharma; avoid unnecessary bloodshed; restore the honor of his family.

STRENGTHS Unmatched adherence to truth; strong political legitimacy; capable administrator; respected by all factions including many Kaurava allies.

WEAKNESSES Fatal attraction to gambling; excessive compassion that can be exploited; passive leadership style; haunted by guilt from the dice game.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Krishna, Bhishma, Drupada, Bhima. Enemies: Duryodhana, Shakuni. Respects: Vidura, Sanjaya.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will propose peace but may accept unfair terms. Likely to prioritize Dharma over tactical advantage. May gamble again if manipulated by Shakuni.

9.4 Bhishma — The Grandsire

BIOGRAPHY Son of King Shantanu and Ganga, Bhishma took a vow of lifelong celibacy and renounced his claim to the throne to allow his father to marry Satyawati. He has served as the protector and commander of the Kuru dynasty for generations. Despite secretly favoring the Pandavas, his vow binds him to serve whichever Kuru sits on the throne.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Prevent the destruction of the Kuru race; maintain the throne of Hastinapur; fulfill his vow while minimizing unnecessary suffering.

STRENGTHS Unmatched military prowess; invulnerability to death by choice (Iccha Mrityu); absolute moral authority; commands respect from all factions.

WEAKNESSES Bound by his vow to the throne; unable to act directly against Duryodhana; torn between duty and morality; aging.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Drona, Kripa, Dhritarashtra. Secretly favors: Pandavas. Respects: Krishna. Rivals: Shikhandi (fated to kill him).

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will propose peace but ultimately serve the Kaurava side. May reveal strategic weaknesses to the Pandavas. Likely to fight with honor even while wishing for their defeat.

9.5 Karna — The Tragic King

BIOGRAPHY The eldest son of Kunti, born from her union with the sun god Surya before her marriage. Abandoned at birth, he was raised by a charioteer and his wife. Despite his humble origins, Karna is the greatest warrior of his age, equal to Arjuna. He is bound by loyalty to Duryodhana, who gave him the kingdom

of Anga and treated him as an equal when all others despised him.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Prove his martial superiority over Arjuna; remain eternally loyal to Duryodhana; find recognition and respect as a warrior regardless of his birth.

STRENGTHS Divine armor (Kavach-Kundal) making him nearly invincible; unmatched generosity (Dhanveer); mastery of the Brahmastra; equal to Arjuna in combat.

WEAKNESSES Bound by his word and sense of honor; susceptible to curses (Parashurama, the Brahmin); internal conflict of loyalty; cannot reveal his true parentage.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Duryodhana, Ashwatthama, Shakuni. Rivals: Arjuna, Krishna. Secret: Son of Kunti (known to Kunti, Krishna).

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will refuse to betray Duryodhana even when offered the throne. May reveal his true identity if Kunti or Krishna approaches him. Likely to make tragic decisions based on honor rather than strategy.

9.6 Shri Krishna — The Divine Strategist

BIOGRAPHY The eighth avatar of Vishnu, Krishna is the ruler of Dwaraka and the supreme strategist of the Pandava faction. He has chosen to serve as Arjuna's charioteer rather than wield weapons, demonstrating his commitment to guiding others toward Dharma rather than imposing his will through force.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Restore Dharma to the world; ensure the victory of righteousness; protect the Yadava race; demonstrate that divine will operates through human choice.

STRENGTHS Divine omniscience and omnipotence; unmatched diplomatic skills; commands the Narayani Sena; ability to see all possible outcomes of any action.

WEAKNESSES Bound by his vow not to use weapons; must work within the constraints of human free will; cannot force outcomes; his divine nature creates resentment among some factions.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Arjuna, all Pandavas, Satyaki, Uddhava. Respects: Bhishma, Vidura. Manipulates: Duryodhana, Shakuni. Opposes: Karna.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will use diplomacy to the maximum extent before resorting to strategic deception. May reveal divine interventions at critical moments. Likely to guide others toward their destiny without directly intervening.

9.7 Shakuni — The Mastermind

BIOGRAPHY Prince of Gandhara, brother of Gandhari, and maternal uncle of the Kauravas. Shakuni is the architect of the Kauravas' most devastating schemes, including the rigged dice game and the disrobing of Draupadi. His hatred for the Kuru dynasty stems from the imprisonment and death of his father Subala by Bhishma.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Destroy the Kuru dynasty from within; avenge his father's death; manipulate events to ensure the mutual destruction of both the Pandavas and Kauravas.

STRENGTHS Master manipulator; unparalleled skill with dice (rigged from the bones of his father); deep understanding of human psychology and greed; operates from within the Kaurava inner circle.

WEAKNESSES Lacks direct military power; hated by the Pandavas and Vidura; overly reliant on Duryodhana's trust; his secret agenda may be exposed.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Duryodhana, Gandhari. Enemies: Vidura, Krishna, Draupadi. Secret enemy of: the entire Kuru dynasty.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will propose another dice game. May attempt to assassinate key Pandava supporters. Likely to sabotage peace negotiations while appearing to support them.

9.8 Draupadi — The Fire-born Queen

BIOGRAPHY Born from a sacred fire (Yajna) to King Drupada of Panchala, Draupadi is the common wife of all five Pandava brothers. Her humiliation during the

dice game — where Dushasana attempted to disrobe her in the royal assembly — has made her the central symbol of the injustice perpetrated by the Kauravas. She has vowed never to bind her hair until Dushasana's blood is used as oil.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Secure justice for her humiliation; ensure the destruction of Dushasana; support her husbands in reclaiming their kingdom; serve as the moral conscience of the Pandava faction.

STRENGTHS Immense political influence as the common wife of all Pandavas; fiery rhetoric; unyielding resolve; ability to sway even the most reluctant warriors through moral outrage.

WEAKNESSES Intense anger that sometimes overrides diplomacy; target of Kaurava aggression; emotionally traumatized by the dice game; unable to forgive.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Bhima, Arjuna, Krishna, Drupada. Enemies: Duryodhana, Shakuni, Dushasana. Respects: Vidura, Draupadi's dignity.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will reject any peace proposal that does not include punishment for Dushasana. May incite Bhima to violence. Likely to use her unbound hair as a constant visual reminder of her vow.

9.9 Drupada — King of Panchala

BIOGRAPHY King of Panchala and father of Draupadi and Dhrishtadyumna. Drupada was humiliated by his former friend Dronacharya, who demanded half of Panchala as Guru Dakshina. He performed a sacred Yajna specifically to produce children who would destroy Drona and the Kauravas. Dhrishtadyumna was born to kill Drona, and Draupadi was born to be the cause of the Kauravas' destruction.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Reclaim his full kingdom from Drona; secure the throne of Hastinapur for Yudhishtira; ensure the destruction of Drona and the Kaurava hierarchy.

STRENGTHS Commands the powerful Panchala army; father of Dhrishtadyumna (the Pandava com-

mander); strong political leverage through the Pandava marriage alliance.

WEAKNESSES Deep personal vendetta that clouds strategic judgment; aging; may prioritize revenge over the Pandavas' broader interests.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Pandavas, Virata. Enemies: Drona, Ashwatthama. Seeks vengeance against: Duryodhana.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will push for war regardless of diplomatic solutions. May attempt to negotiate separately if his interests diverge from the Pandavas'. Likely to use his army as leverage.

9.10 Vidura — The Voice of Dharma

BIOGRAPHY The incarnation of Yama (the god of justice), born of a maidservant to the sage Vyasa. Vidura serves as the prime minister and moral conscience of the Hastinapur court. Despite his low birth, his wisdom and integrity have made him the most respected advisor in the kingdom. He is the only person who dared to speak truth to Duryodhana during the dice game.

POLITICAL AMBITIONS Uphold absolute Dharma; guide Dhritarashtra away from adharma; protect the Pandavas; prevent the war through moral persuasion.

STRENGTHS Incarnation of Yama; unmatched wisdom; fearless in speaking truth to power; respected by all factions; commands moral authority that transcends birth status.

WEAKNESSES Born of a maidservant, limiting his formal political power; often ignored by Duryodhana; cannot command armies or enforce his will directly.

RELATIONSHIPS Allies: Yudhishtira, Krishna, Bhishma. Enemies: Duryodhana, Shakuni. Trusted by: Dhritarashtra, Sanjaya.

CRISIS BEHAVIOR Will deliver the most powerful Dharma arguments in the committee. May threaten to leave the court if his counsel is ignored. Likely to be dismissed by the Kaurava faction but revered by neutrals.

10 Committee Dynamics

10.1 How Directives Work

In this committee, directives function as formal proposals submitted to the Royal Council. A directive may propose peace terms, military mobilization, succession arrangements, or diplomatic initiatives. Directives require a simple majority to pass, but the King (Dhritarashtra) retains veto power over any directive that contradicts the established laws of succession.

10.2 How Alliances Form

Alliances in this committee are formed through marriage agreements, military pacts, trade arrangements, and shared ideological commitments. Delegates should actively negotiate with other delegations during unmoderated caucuses to build coalitions. The committee recognizes that alliances are not permanent — they can be broken, renegotiated, or betrayed based on changing circumstances.

10.3 How Succession Changes

Succession in the Kuru dynasty follows a complex set of rules. The throne is inherited by the eldest son of the reigning king, but the Pandavas claim inheritance from their father Pandu, who was the legitimate king before Dhritarashtra assumed the throne as regent. This creates a fundamental legal dispute that the committee must resolve. Delegates may propose alternative succession arrangements, including partition of the kingdom, joint rule, or abdication.

10.4 How Military Campaigns Work

Military campaigns are initiated through formal declarations submitted to the Royal Council. The commander-in-chief (Bhishma) has authority over military strategy, but the King retains the power to authorize or veto military action. Allied kingdom contingents may choose to participate or withdraw from campaigns based on their own interests. Military campaigns consume resources and may trigger cascading crises.

10.5 How Diplomacy Works

Diplomacy in this committee operates through multiple channels: formal sessions in the Royal Council, unmoderated caucuses (representing private negotiations between kingdoms), crisis notes (secret communications), and royal decrees (binding orders from Dhritarashtra). Krishna serves as the supreme diplomat, and his interventions can shift the balance of power in unexpected ways.

10.6 How Betrayals Affect Politics

Betrayal is a recognized political tool in this committee. Characters like Shakuni, Yuyutsu, and Kritavarma all have documented histories of shifting allegiances. Betrayals may trigger crisis events, shift alliance calculations, and create new power dynamics. However, betray-

als also carry costs — characters who betray their faction may lose the trust and support of their former allies.

10.7 How Secret Negotiations Function

Secret negotiations are conducted through crisis notes — written messages passed between delegates that are not disclosed to the full committee. These notes may contain offers, threats, intelligence, or proposals. The Chairs will deliver crisis notes to their recipients and may generate consequences based on the content of these communications. Characters like Shakuni, Sahadeva, and Sanjaya have particular strengths in intelligence gathering and secret diplomacy.

11 Rules of Procedure

This committee operates under a customized Model United Nations procedure designed to reflect the political dynamics of ancient Hastinapur while maintaining the structure and rigor expected of an international Model UN conference.

11.1 Roll Call

Each session begins with a formal roll call. Delegates must respond with their kingdom name and alignment status. Absences are recorded and may affect voting eligibility.

11.2 Moderated Caucus

Moderated caucuses are formal debate sessions where delegates speak on a specific topic for a limited time (typically 60-90 seconds). Topics may include peace negotiations, military strategy, succession disputes, or Dharma debates. Speaking time is distributed by the Chair, with preference given to delegates whose portfolios are most directly affected by the topic.

11.3 Unmoderated Caucus

Unmoderated caucuses represent private negotiations between delegations. Delegates may leave their seats to form alliances, negotiate terms, draft directives, or exchange intelligence. These caucuses are the primary mechanism for building coalitions and developing crisis strategies.

11.4 Royal Council Session

A special session format where all delegates gather to deliberate on matters of supreme importance. The Royal Council session is called by the Chair and requires all delegates to participate. During this session, the King's authority is supreme, and decisions made by the Council are binding on all factions.

11.5 Private Negotiations

Delegates may request private negotiations with specific other delegations through the Chairs. These negotiations are confidential and their outcomes are reported only to the

participants. Private negotiations may result in secret alliances, intelligence sharing, or betrayal agreements.

11.6 War Declarations

A formal proposal to initiate military action. War declarations require a two-thirds majority in the Royal Council to pass, but the King retains veto power. A successful war declaration triggers a series of crisis events and military mobilization phases.

11.7 Royal Orders

Directives issued by Dhritarashtra that are binding on all delegates. Royal orders may override council decisions and represent the exercise of executive authority. Delegates may challenge royal orders through Dharma debates or by invoking the authority of Bhishma.

11.8 Secret Directives

Proposals submitted through crisis notes that are not disclosed to the full committee. Secret directives may include assassination plans, espionage operations, or clandestine military movements. If discovered, secret directives may trigger immediate crisis responses.

11.9 Crisis Notes

Written communications between delegates that are delivered through the Chairs. Crisis notes may contain offers, threats, intelligence, or proposals. The Chairs will generate consequences based on the content and recipients of these notes.

11.10 Special Sessions

Emergency sessions called by the Chair in response to crisis events. Special sessions may address assassination attempts, foreign invasions, natural disasters, or other unexpected developments. All delegates must participate in special sessions.

11.11 Voting

Standard Model UN voting procedures apply. Resolutions require a simple majority to pass. On matters of succession or war declaration, a two-thirds majority is required. Abstentions are recorded but do not count toward the majority.

11.12 Emergency Powers

In the event of a crisis that threatens the stability of the committee, the Chairs may invoke emergency powers to introduce additional crisis elements, modify the agenda, or restructure the committee dynamics. Emergency powers are used sparingly and with the goal of enhancing the educational value of the simulation.

12 Crisis Possibilities

The following are examples of crisis themes that may emerge during the committee. These are provided to give delegates a sense of the range of possibilities without revealing specific crisis triggers or outcomes.

12.1 Succession Disputes

The legal question of who rightfully inherits the throne of Hastinapur is the central crisis of this committee. Possible developments include challenges to Dhritarashtra's legitimacy, claims by Yuyutsu to represent a "true" Kaurava line, and alternative succession arrangements proposed by Krishna or Bhishma.

12.2 Political Betrayal

Characters with documented histories of shifting allegiances — including Yuyutsu, Kri-tavarma, Shalya, and Shakuni — may attempt to betray their factions. Such betrayals could trigger immediate military or political consequences.

12.3 Kingdom Alliances

Regional kingdoms may shift their allegiances based on changing circumstances. The neutral states — particularly the Yadava faction under Balarama — represent critical swing votes that could determine the outcome.

12.4 Foreign Invasions

The threat of external invasion from kingdoms outside the immediate Kuru-Pandava conflict could force all factions to cooperate. Historical precedents include the invasions of Jarasandha and the ongoing threat from the Kambojas.

12.5 Natural Disasters

Natural calamities — droughts, floods, or earthquakes — could destabilize the political order and force the committee to address humanitarian concerns alongside political disputes.

12.6 Internal Rebellions

Discontent within the Kaurava faction — particularly from moral dissenters like Vikarna — could lead to internal splits that weaken the Kaurava position and create opportunities for the Pandavas.

12.7 Moral Dilemmas

The fundamental question of Dharma versus personal loyalty creates ongoing moral crises. Characters like Bhishma, Kripacharya, and Karna face impossible choices between duty and righteousness that could reshape the political landscape.

12.8 Assassination Attempts

The committee may face crisis events involving assassination attempts against key figures. Historical precedents include the lac palace conspiracy and the attempted poisoning of Bhima.

12.9 Unexpected Diplomacy

Krishna's diplomatic interventions, Sanjaya's divine sight, and Vidura's moral arguments may produce unexpected shifts in the political landscape that surprise all factions.

12.10 Religious Crises

Questions about the nature of Dharma, the role of divine intervention, and the legitimacy of religious authority could create crises that transcend political factionalism.

13 Research Questions

Delegates are encouraged to research the following questions in preparation for the committee:

1. What defines Dharma in the context of the Mahabharata? How does it differ from modern concepts of justice?
2. Should succession follow merit or birth? What are the arguments for each position?
3. Can peace justify compromise? When does compromise become complicity?
4. When is war morally acceptable? What conditions must be met before violence is justified?
5. How should kingdoms handle neutrality in a time of conflict? What are the costs of non-alignment?
6. What obligations do elders have to the younger generation? Can a vow be broken?
7. Is loyalty to a friend more important than loyalty to truth?
8. What is the relationship between personal honor and political responsibility?
9. How should a king balance the interests of his sons with the welfare of his kingdom?
10. Can a ruler who is blind to justice still be a legitimate sovereign?
11. What role should divine authority play in human political decisions?
12. Is it justifiable to use deception to achieve a righteous end?
13. How should women's rights and dignity be protected in a patriarchal political system?
14. What are the responsibilities of a neutral power with overwhelming military strength?
15. Can a kingdom be partitioned, and under what conditions?
16. What is the moral status of a vow made under duress?
17. How should a state handle the claims of adopted or illegitimate heirs?
18. Is military strength a legitimate basis for political claims?
19. What are the ethical limits of espionage and intelligence gathering?
20. How should a kingdom respond to the humiliation of its queen?
21. What is the relationship between economic power and political legitimacy?

22. Can a war of revenge be distinguished from a war of justice?
23. How should a king handle dissent within his own family?
24. What are the obligations of a teacher to his students in matters of state?
25. Is it ethical to fight on the side one knows to be wrong, out of duty alone?
26. How should a kingdom balance tradition with the demands of justice?
27. What role does karma play in political decision-making?
28. Can a kingdom's military commanders refuse to serve an unjust ruler?
29. How should a state handle the legacy of a previous ruler's mistakes?
30. What is the moral weight of a promise made to a friend versus a duty owed to a kingdom?
31. How should a kingdom respond to the threat of annihilation?
32. Is it justifiable to sacrifice the many for the sake of the few?
33. What are the limits of royal authority in a system governed by Dharma?
34. How should a kingdom handle the claims of foreign powers to its throne?
35. Can a war be prevented when both sides believe they are in the right?
36. What is the role of prophecy and destiny in political planning?
37. How should a kingdom balance military preparedness with diplomatic outreach?
38. Is it ethical to use one's divine powers to influence political outcomes?
39. What are the responsibilities of a kingdom that has been humiliated?
40. How should a state handle the tension between individual honor and collective survival?

14 Glossary

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Ak-shauhini	A military division consisting of 21,870 chariots, 21,870 elephants, 65,610 cavalry, and 109,350 infantry. The standard unit of military measurement in the Mahabharata.
Adharma	Unrighteousness; conduct that violates Dharma. Actions motivated by greed, hatred, or selfishness.
Astya	A divine weapon (astra) granted by the gods, possessing supernatural destructive power. Examples include the Brahmastra and Pashupatastra.
Chakravyuha	An impenetrable military formation in the shape of a spiral wheel. Only Arjuna and Abhimanyu knew how to enter it; only Arjuna knew how to exit.
Dharma	Righteousness, duty, moral law. The central concept of Hindu ethics; the principle that upholds the cosmic order.
Dhar-maraja	"King of Dharma"; the title given to Yudhishtira for his unwavering commitment to truth and justice.

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Guru Dakshina	A teacher's fee or offering; in this context, Drona demanded half of Panchala as payment for his military training.
Hastinapur	The capital city of the Kuru kingdom; the seat of power and the center of the political crisis.
In-draprastha	The magnificent capital built by the Pandavas; the kingdom they were denied after their exile.
Kavach-Kundal	Divine armor and earrings born with Karna, granting him near-invincibility. He sacrificed them before the war out of his legendary generosity.
Kshatriya	The warrior and ruler caste in the Hindu social order. The Pandavas and Kauravas are Kshatriyas by birth.
Moha	Attachment or delusion; one of the six enemies of the mind in Hindu philosophy. Dhritarashtra's Moha for his sons is his defining flaw.
Narayani Sena	The army of Krishna, consisting of one Akshauhini of elite warriors. Krishna offered it to the Kauravas while personally supporting the Pandavas.
Pashupatastra	The most powerful divine weapon, belonging to Lord Shiva. Arjuna received it after severe penance.
Rajasuya Yajna	A royal sacrifice performed by a king to establish his sovereignty over all other rulers.
Swayamvara	A ceremony in which a princess chooses her husband from among assembled suitors. Draupadi's swayamvara was won by Arjuna.
Tapasya	Austerity or intense spiritual practice; the accumulated power of Gandhari's Tapasya gave her the ability to curse.
Vow (Pratigya)	A solemn promise; Bhishma's Pratigya of celibacy and loyalty to the throne is the foundational vow of the Mahabharata.
Yajna	A sacred fire ritual; used here both for religious ceremonies and for the ritual birth of Draupadi and Dhritadyumna.
Yuga	An epoch or age in Hindu cosmology. The Mahabharata is set at the end of the Dvapara Yuga.

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